

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current
scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

A 280.39
M34 And
Cop. 2

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service

AMS-140

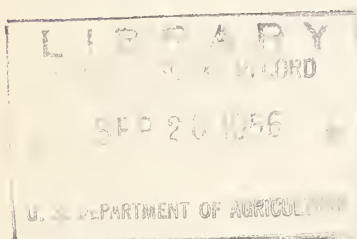
Preliminary Release

FOR RELEASE ON
SEPTEMBER 6, 1956

Selected Data Relating to

WOMEN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD

WOOL AND OTHER FIBERS



	page
<u>Suits, Skirts, Sweaters</u>	
Storage, mothproofing, moth damage	2
Usual method of cleaning	7
Preferred method of cleaning	9
<u>Sweaters</u>	
Attitudes toward washing	10
Reasons for selection	11
<u>Home Sewing and Knitting</u>	
Use of wool	12
Nonuse of wool	13
Suggested improvements	15

Washington 25, D. C.
September 1956

Technical advice during the development of the specifications for this study was provided by The Wool Bureau, Inc., National Knitted Outerwear Association, Geigy Chemical Corporation, and Agricultural Research Service.

The data on which this report is based were collected by Stewart, Dougall & Associates, Inc., of New York and, for teen-age girls, by Audits and Surveys, Inc., of New York, both under contract with the United States Department of Agriculture.

This study is one of a series concerning consumer preferences for farm products conducted by the Market Development Branch, Marketing Research Division. The consumer preference studies are under the immediate direction of Trienah Meyers.

Selected Data Relating to
WOMEN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD WOOL AND OTHER FIBERS

In Suits, Skirts, and Sweaters and
in Home Sewing and Knitting

By Esther S. Hochstim, project director
Market Development Branch

This preliminary report of an extensive study presents a preview of some of the major findings relating to women's use of and attitudes toward wool and other fibers in 3 items of clothing: fall, winter, and spring suits and skirts, and sweaters without regard to season.

This compilation of data is released in this preliminary form in order to make statistics available to the public as quickly as possible. It follows an earlier release dated April 1956. Included here are certain tables on mothproofing, methods of cleaning and washability, sweater purchase, knitting, and home sewing. A full report containing detailed information on these topics and on the other subjects included in the questionnaire is being prepared for publication.

Since this release is made prior to final review and analysis, it is subject to possible revision.

The tables are based on 2,425 personal interviews made between October and December 1955 with homemakers and with women between 18 and 65 years of age. Some tables include findings from a separate study of girls 14 to 17 years of age. Both samples of respondents were selected by area probability techniques to be representative of all households in the United States.

Table 53.--Percentage distribution of replies to the questions: "This summer, did you store any of your woolen clothes, blankets, etc. -- either at home or commercially? Did you mothproof any of your woolen things?"

Practice	Total	
	<u>Percent</u>	
Neither stored nor mothproofed -----		14
Stored and/or mothproofed -----		86
Stored at home only -----		76
Mothproofed at home -----	64	
Mothproofed at home and commercially -----	1	
Commercially mothproofed only -----	1	
Did not mothproof -----	10	
Stored both at home and commercially -----		5
Mothproofed at home -----	3	
Mothproofed at home and commercially -----	$\frac{1}{1}$	
Commercially mothproofed only -----	$\frac{1}{*}$	
Did not mothproof -----	1	
Stored commercially only -----		2
Mothproofed but did not store -----		3
Summary:		
Total stored at home -----		81
Total stored commercially -----		7
Total mothproofed at home or commercially -----		75
Number of cases -----		2,425

1/ Asterisk indicates less than 1 percent.

Table 5-5.--Women who mothproofed and stored woolens at home and/or commercially: Percentage distribution of replies to the questions, "In total, how much did the materials you used for mothproofing and storing this past summer cost? In total, what was the cost of having the mothproofing or storage done commercially?"

	Total females		Total reporting costs		Average cost reported ^{1/}
	<u>No.</u>	<u>Pct.</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Pct.</u>	<u>Dollars</u>
Total storing and/or mothproofing ---	2,101	86			
At home only -----	1,876	77	1,719	71	1.50
Commercially only -----	46	2	41	2	11.09
Both at home and commercially ---	179	7			9.16
Home costs -----	179	7	148	6	2.48
Commercial costs -----	179	7	107	4	6.68
Total home costs -----	2,055	84	1,867	77	1.58
Total commercial costs -----	225	9	148	6	7.90

^{1/} Dollar figures must be interpreted with caution because of the proportions of women not reporting costs and because some who did report costs may not have been able to recall them exactly after a lapse of some months.

Table 5-6.--Percentage distribution of replies to the question, "In the past year, were any of your woolen things damaged by moths?"

Replies	Percent
Yes -----	9
No -----	88
Unable to state at this time --	3
Total -----	<u>100</u>
Number of cases -----	<u>2,425</u>

Table 5-7.--Woolen items damaged by moths: Percentage distribution of replies to the question, "What items? Were these protected against moths and, if so, how?"

Woolen items damaged	No protection	Protection given				Number of items
		Commercial	Home storage only	Home moth-proofing only	Both home storage and moth-proofing	
	<u>Pct.</u>	<u>Pct.</u>	<u>Pct.</u>	<u>Pct.</u>	<u>Pct.</u>	<u>No.</u>
Total items damaged	55	1	17	9	18	277

Table 5-7a.--Woolen items damaged by moths: Percentage distribution of replies to the question, "What items? Was the damaged item repaired?"

Woolen items damaged	Extent of damage in terms of repair			Number of items
	Repaired	Damaged beyond repair	Not repaired but could have been	
	<u>Pct.</u>	<u>Pct.</u>	<u>Pct.</u>	<u>No.</u>
Total items damaged -----	25	34	41	277

Women who reported moth damage: Percentage distribution of average number of damaged items; average repair and replacement costs

Percent reported that one or more wool items had been damaged by moths -----	9 percent
Average number of damaged items per woman -----	1.3
<u>Repair costs</u>	
Percent of damaged items repaired -----	25 percent
Average cost per item to repair -----	\$ 1.38
<u>Replacement costs - when item damaged beyond repair</u>	
Percent of damaged items that were beyond repair -----	34 percent
Average initial cost per item -----	\$16.20
<hr/>	
Number of cases -----	2,425

Table 56.--Percentage distribution of replies to the questions: "Would you yourself be interested in having woolen garments made permanently mothproofed by the manufacturer?" If yes: "Would you be willing to pay 10¢ extra for a sweater in order to have it mothproofed? Would you be willing to pay 50¢ extra for a dress or suit in order to have it mothproofed? Would you be willing to pay \$1 extra for a coat in order to have it mothproofed?"

Replies	Total
	<u>Percent</u>
Would not be interested in having woolen garments made permanently mothproofed -----	13
Would be interested in having woolen garments made permanently mothproofed -----	87
Would be willing to pay 10 cents extra for sweater -----	84
Would be willing to pay 50 cents extra for dress or suit -----	82
Would be willing to pay \$1 extra for a coat ----	83
Number of cases -----	2,425

Table 36.--Women who own fall, winter and spring suits or skirts: Percentage distribution of replies to the questions: "How do you take care of your fall, winter and spring suits (skirts)--are they washed or dry cleaned?" If "dry cleaned only": "Do you wash any of your suits (skirts)?"

Fibers owned	Method of care		Cases
	Wash some or all	Dry clean all	
	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>
Suits			
All suit owners -----	6	94	1,524
Wool -----	1	99	1,129
Wool and rayon -----	1	99	253
Wool and cotton -----	2	98	53
Wool and Dacron -----	8	92	39
All other wool blends -----	8	92	39
Rayon or acetate -----	5	95	539
Cotton -----	15	85	230
Silk -----	3	97	29
All others -----	11	89	201
Skirts			
All skirt owners -----	41	59	1,324
Wool -----	5	95	1,005
Wool and rayon -----	9	91	173
Wool and cotton -----	8	92	65
Wool and Orlon -----	43	57	49
Wool and Dacron -----	5	95	42
All other wool blends -----	25	75	24
Cotton -----	64	36	607
Rayon or acetate -----	18	82	450
Orlon -----	43	57	93
Silk -----	9	91	34
Linen -----	52	48	25
All others -----	26	74	164

Table 37.--Women and girls who own sweaters: Percentage distribution of replies to the question: "Considering most of your (name of fiber) sweaters, do you usually wash or dry clean them?"

Fibers owned	Method of care			Cases
	Wash all or most	Dry clean all or most	Not ascertained	
	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>
<u>Women</u> ^{1/}				
Wool -----	56	43	1	1,365
Wool and cotton -----	82	15	3	33
Wool and nylon -----	86	14	-	29
All other wool mixtures -----	80	20	-	46
Orlon -----	83	10	7	725
Nylon -----	92	7	1	582
Cotton -----	92	7	1	288
Cashmere -----	44	52	4	186
Vicara -----	74	19	7	27
All others -----	65	17	18	104
<u>Girls</u>				
Wool -----	57	36	7	1,216
Wool and cotton -----	63	13	24	59
Wool and rayon -----	67	13	20	43
Wool and Orlon -----	63	12	25	34
Orlon -----	87	9	4	1,125
Nylon -----	91	8	1	842
Cotton -----	91	6	3	373
Cashmere -----	35	48	17	222
Rayon -----	69	17	14	64
Dacron -----	73	19	8	37

^{1/} This question was asked for each fiber separately. Examination of the answers for individual fibers shows that 61 percent of the sweater owners said they wash all or most of their sweaters regardless of fiber, 19 percent dry clean all or most, 20 percent said they wash all or most sweaters in some fibers, dry clean all or most in other fibers.

Table 42.--Women who own fall, winter or spring suits, or skirts, or sweaters:
Percentage distribution of answers to the question: "If you could be sure
of good results, how would you prefer to take care of all your suits (skirts,
sweaters)--regardless of fiber? Would you want them washed or dry-cleaned?"

Background characteristics	Preference			Cases
	Prefer washing	Prefer dry-cleaning	Not ascertained	
	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>
SUITS				
Total owners -----	31	68	1	1,524
SKIRTS				
Total owners -----	53	46	1	1,324
SWEATERS				
Total owners -----	82	17	1	1,798

Table 40.--Women who wash all or most sweaters of certain fibers; Percentage distribution of replies to the question: "Is there anything you don't like about the way the sweaters come out?"

Replies	Sweater fibers washed ^{1/}						
	Total who wash sweaters	Wool	Wool blends	Orlon	Nylon	Cotton	Cash- mere
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Nothing disliked -----	81	78	85	88	74	86	89
Something disliked -----	2/19	2/ 22	2/ 15	2/ 12	2/ 26	2/ 14	11
Didn't hold shape, stretched	7	6	7	4	14	9	3
Shrank -----	5	13	1	1	3/ *	4	-
Knubbed, knotted, pilled, got linty -----	5	2	7	5	11	1	3
Faded, lost its brightness -	1	1	3	1	2	1	•
Became hard, weave tightened, lost its softness -----	1	2	•	1	*	•	1
Lost its new look -----	1	1	•	*	*	*	1
All others -----	2	3	•	1	1	1	3
Number of cases -----	1,433	769	89	602	535	265	82

^{1/} The number of other sweater fibers washed was too small for separate analysis.

^{2/} Percentages add to more than subtotals because some women reported more than one dissatisfaction.

^{3/} Asterisk indicates less than 1 percent.

Table 31.--Women and teenage girls who had bought a sweater in the past year:
Percentage distribution of replies to the questions: "Can you tell me the
most important reason why you happened to select this particular sweater?
What other things influenced you to select this sweater?"

Reasons	Total women	Girls 14-17 years
	Percent ^{1/}	Percent ^{1/}
Attributes of the sweater itself:		
Fabric -----	78	59
Wanted a specific fiber -----	45	26
Ease of care, easy to care for -----	27	9
Weight: warm, heavy; cool, light -----	19	8
Texture; construction; soft, loose weave; hard tight weave -----	14	7
Will hold shape, not stretch or sag -----	8	5
Liked material (general) -----	6	19
New fiber, wanted to try -----	5	1
Will hold up, wear well -----	4	3
Nonirritating, nonallergic -----	4	1
Good quality, liked quality -----	^{2/} 2	1
Moth resistant -----	* ^{2/}	--
Miscellaneous fabric mentions -----	1	*
Liked color, wanted that color -----	65	65
Liked style -----	40	39
Fit, fit well -----	7	4
Appearance attractive, good looking -----	5	10
Matched other items in wardrobe -----	4	23
Versatile style, for many occasions -----	2	1
Tailored well, well finished -----	1	1
Looked well on, was flattering, becoming -----	1	2
Other factors:		
Price was right; was on sale -----	21	15
Recommended by friend, relative -----	3	6
Well known brand, good brand -----	2	2
Advertising; saw, heard advertised -----	*	*
Influence of salesclerk -----	*	*
Miscellaneous other factors -----	*	^{3/} 10
Not ascertained -----	*	5
Number of cases -----	863	1,362

^{1/} Percentages (left column) add to more than the group totals (right column) and these add to more than 100 percent because some women gave more than 1 reply.

^{2/} Asterisk indicates less than 1 percent.

^{3/} The majority of answers in this category were that girls needed the particular sweater for a particular occasion.

Table 7-7.--Women who had made new clothes in the past year: Percentage distribution of replies to the questions, "Have you ever made anything out of wool? Did you consider making anything out of wool this past year?"

Replies	Women who make new clothes
	<u>Percent</u>
<u>Women who made new clothes:</u>	
Sewed with wool in past year -----	30
Did not sew with wool in past year -----	70
Total -----	100
<u>Of those who didn't sew with wool in past year:</u>	
Have sewed with wool in past -----	33
Have never sewed with wool -----	37
Total -----	70
<u>Of those who didn't sew with wool in past year:</u>	
Have considered sewing with wool --	9
Have not considered sewing with wool -----	61
Total -----	70
Number of cases -----	962

Table 7-8.--New clothes sewers in the past year who had not used wool fabrics:
Percentage distribution of replies to the question: "How is it you have not made anything out of wool in the past year?"

Reasons	Women who did not sew with wool in past year
	<u>Percent</u> ^{1/}
Did not need (additional) wool garments; don't wear wool in this climate; wool is too warm -----	20
No occasion to use wool, children grown, don't do much sewing -----	12
Don't like feel of wool, scratchy, itchy, allergic ---	11
Prefer washable materials -----	3
Takes too long to sew wool - too busy, no time -----	16
Not skilled enough to work with wool -----	14
Health reasons - not well enough to undertake working with wool -----	4
Difficult to work with (general) -----	3
Too expensive, costly, can't afford -----	13
Too costly to experiment with, don't want to invest that much in something which may not turn out well -	5
Just as cheap to buy readymade wool garments -----	4
Prefer readymade wool garments (general) -----	4
New sewer: just haven't tried wool yet -----	3
Do not like to sew wool materials -----	2
All other reasons -----	1
No particular reason, reason not specified -----	6
Number of cases -----	673

^{1/} Percentages add to more than 100 because some women gave more than 1 reason for not using wool.

Table 6-10.--Women who knitted in the past year and have not used wool yarn:
Percentage distribution of replies to the question, "How is it that you
have not used wool yarn during the past year?"

Reasons	Women who knitted during past year
	<u>Percent</u> <u>1/</u>
Care, laundering	
Doesn't wash well: shrinks, colors run --	27
Synthetics are easier to take care of ---	22
Irritating: itchy, scratchy, allergic -----	17
Durability: doesn't wear well, doesn't wear as well as other fibers -----	15
Items knitted did not require wool -----	10
Not as easy to work with as other fiber ---	7
Prefer nylon -----	7
Too warm, too heavy -----	7
Availability: couldn't find in store -----	2
No particular reason -----	22
Number of cases -----	41

1/ Percentages add to more than 100 because some women gave more than 1 reason for not using wool yarn.

Table 7-9.--Women who sewed new clothes in the past year: Percentage distribution of replies to the question, "All in all, do you have any overall suggestions as to how wool fabrics for sewing could be improved?"

Replies	New clothes sewers
	<u>Percent</u>
Had no suggestions for improvements -----	75
Had suggestions for improvements -----	25
Total -----	100
Number of cases -----	962

Table 7-9a.--Women who had suggestions for improvement of wool fabric: Percentage distribution of suggestions for improvement

Suggestions	New clothes sewers
	<u>Percent</u> ^{1/}
Intrinsic qualities of fiber:	
Should be softer, less scratchy, itchy, sticky -	17
Improve construction or weave -----	15
Should be lighter in weight -----	12
Care and laundering:	
Should be preshrunk -----	21
Should be washable -----	12
Should be wrinkle resistant after washing -----	2
Should be able to be pressed, hold up under pressing -----	3
Price:	
Should be cheaper, less expensive -----	17
Mothproofed:	
Should be mothproofed, should make a wool mixture to deter moths -----	9
Color:	
Should be a larger variety of colors -----	5
Should improve the dye in wool material -----	2
Should come in greater widths -----	4
All others -----	6
Number of cases -----	241

^{1/} Percentages add to more than 100 because some women gave more than 1 suggestion for improvement of wool fabric.

Table 7-9b.--New clothes sewers in past year: Percentage distribution of replies to the questions, "Did you sew with wool in the past year? All in all, do you have any overall suggestions as to how wool fabrics for sewing could be improved?"

Replies	Use of wool	
	Sewed with wool in past year	Did not sew with wool in past year
	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Had no suggestions for improvements --	65	79
Had suggestions for improvements -----	35	21
Total -----	100	100
Number of cases -----	289	673

Table 7-9c.--Users and nonusers of wool for sewing in the past year who had suggestions for improvements of wool fabric: Percentage distribution of suggestions for improvement

Suggestions	Use of wool	
	Sewed with wool in past year	Did not sew with wool in past year
	<u>Percent</u> ^{1/}	<u>Percent</u> ^{1/}
Intrinsic qualities of fiber:		
Should be softer, less scratchy, itchy, sticky -----	8	24
Improve construction or weave -----	20	11
Should be lighter in weight -----	9	15
Care and laundering:		
Should be preshrunk -----	21	20
Should be washable -----	12	11
Should be wrinkle resistant after washing -----	5	1
Should be able to be pressed, hold up under pressing -----	4	3
Price:		
Should be cheaper, less expensive ---	13	20
Mothproofed:		
Should be mothproofed, should make a wool mixture to deter moths -----	8	10
Color:		
Should be a larger variety of colors	12	--
Should improve the dye in wool material -----	1	2
Should come in greater widths -----	5	4
All others -----	10	4
Number of cases -----	101	140

^{1/} Percentages add to more than 100 because some women gave more than 1 suggestion for improvement of wool fabric.

Table 6-11.--Women who knitted in the past year: Percentage distribution of replies to the question, "All in all, do you have any overall suggestions as to how wool yarn for knitting could be improved?"

Replies	Women who knitted during past year
	<u>Percent</u>
Had no suggestions for improving wool yarns for knitting -----	66
Had suggestions for improving wool yarns for knitting -----	34
Total -----	100
Number of cases -----	221

Table 6-11a.--Women who had suggestions for improvement of wool yarn for knitting: Percentage distribution of suggestions for improvements

Suggestions	Women who knitted during past year
	<u>Percent 1/</u>
Care and laundering:	
Preshrink yarns -----	25
Make yarns easier to wash -----	3
Performance:	
Make yarns stronger, keep from breaking, keep yarns from splitting -----	16
Add synthetic fibers for strength and durability	4
Make yarns so that they do not stretch -----	3
Texture:	
Make yarns softer, smoother, less scratchy ---	12
Make yarns more even textured -----	11
Color:	
Make standard colors (not dye lots) -----	8
Make wider variety of colors -----	5
Make colors permanent, fadeproof -----	4
Winding:	
Wind in balls instead of hanks -----	9
Make starting ends easier to find, avoid snarling	7
Mothproof -----	5
Make wool yarn finer -----	3
All other suggestions -----	9
Number of cases -----	76

1/ Percentages add to more than 100 because some women gave more than 1 suggestion.

